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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/960,652	09/24/2001	Claudio De Simone	2818-58	5995

7590

12/10/2002

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EXAMINER

AFREMOVA, VERA

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

1651

DATE MAILED: 12/10/2002

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.
09/960,652

Applicant(s)
De Simone

Examiner
Vera Afremova

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1651

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 1 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136 (a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on Sep 24, 2001
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11; 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-24 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above, claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☒ Claims 1-24 are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- 11) ☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on _____ is: a) ☐ approved b) ☐ disapproved by the Examiner.
If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) ☒ Acknowledgement is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some* c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____
3. ☒ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
*See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgement is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e).
a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 15) ☐ Acknowledgement is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). _____
- 2) ☒ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s). 1 6) ☐ Other: _____

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DETAILED ACTION

Claims 1-24 are pending and subject to restriction requirement.

Restriction

Restriction is required under 35 U.S.C. 121 and 372.

This application contains the following inventions or groups of inventions which are not so linked as to form a single general inventive concept under PCT Rule 13.1.

In accordance with 37 CFR 1.499, applicant is required, in reply to this action, to elect a single invention to which the claims must be restricted.

Group I, claim(s) 1-14, drawn to a composition comprising alkaline sphingomyelase derived from lactic bacteria.

Group II, claim(s) 15-24, drawn to a method of using a composition comprising alkaline sphingomyelase derived from lactic bacteria for preparing and/or administering pharmaceutical compositions suitable in treatments of intestinal disorders.

The inventions listed as Groups I and II do not relate to a single general inventive concept under PCT Rule 13.1 because, under PCT Rule 13.2, they lack the same or corresponding special technical features for the following reasons.

The same or corresponding special technical feature of the claims of both groups which defines a contribution over the prior art such as a composition comprising alkaline

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sphingomyelase derived from lactic bacteria, is known in the prior art. For example: see table 1 at page 1202 of the reference by Sugimoto et al. Therefore, the first independent claim of the instant invention does not avoid the prior art and, thus, the inventive link is broken. MPEP 37 CFR 1.475. The phospholipase of the reference by Sugimoto et al. is the same enzyme as the presently claimed sphingomyelase in view of the applicants' disclosure, for example: see the IDS reference WO 98/22082 (page 1, par. 2, lines 8-9).

In addition, the reference by Sugimoto et al. teaches that alkaline enzymatic preparations derived from lactic bacteria are suitable and/or can be used for cheese ripening processes (page 1201, col.1, line 9-11).

Applicant is advised that the reply to this requirement to be complete must include an election of the invention to be examined even though the requirement be traversed (37 CFR 1.143).

For further prosecution, applicants is also advised to amend claims which provides for the use of a composition (claims 15-24), since these claims do not set forth any steps involved in the method/process and it is unclear what method/process applicant is intending to encompass. These claims, when/if elected, will be rejected under 35 U.S.C. 101 and 35 U.S.C. 112, par. 2.

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Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Vera Afremova whose telephone number is (703) 308-9351. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday to Friday from 9:00 to 5:30.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Michael Wityshyn, can be reached on (703) 308-4743. The fax phone number for this Group is (703) 308-4242.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the Group receptionist whose telephone number is (703) 308-0196.

Vera Afremova

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December 5, 2002.

VERA AFREMOVA

PATENT EXAMINER

